

June 15, 1971

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT'S FILES

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Ambassador Dobrynin
Henry A. Kissinger

DATE & TIME: Tuesday, June 15, 1971
2:30 P.M.

PLACE: The Oval Office

The meeting was arranged by Dr. Kissinger in response to the request by Ambassador Dobrynin that he personally deliver the message of the Soviet Government for a Five-Power nuclear conference.

Ambassador Dobrynin opened the conversation by handing to the President the official Soviet text and a translation. He said, "As is obvious, the Soviet Union is asking for a conference of nuclear powers to discuss the question of general and complete nuclear disarmament. The place can be wherever is convenient and the agenda is open. A preparatory meeting is acceptable. The Soviet Government hopes that your reply will be positive. Of course, Soviet/US talks will continue bilaterally outside the conference as part of the SALT talks. The note is being delivered today in Paris, London, Peking and Washington." (Copy of note is attached)

The President asked what preparatory work Ambassador Dobrynin had in mind. Was he thinking of Foreign Ministers? The Ambassador said, no, they were thinking of Foreign Ministry officials and Ambassadors. The time, place and modalities could be handled either through diplomatic channels or otherwise.

The President then said, "Let's be realistic. The key to this sort of thing is what the two major nuclear powers will do. It is a question of leadership at the top -- I don't mean at the top of the governments, but at the top of this group of five."

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Ambassador Dobrynin asked, "Do you have anything in mind, Mr. President?" The President replied, "We will consider your proposal seriously. The way our two governments can make the most progress is through the talks that you and Kissinger have been having. They are completely confidential with nobody leaking. Your government has confidence in you; Kissinger has a special relationship with me. Apart from the cosmetics of a Five-Power discussion, the real issue is the Two-Power relationship."

Ambassador Dobrynin said, "Well, how shall we do it?" The President answered, "We will make a formal reply. Then you have a little talk with Henry Kissinger." The Ambassador said, "What do you think of US/Soviet relations in general?" The President said, "We can make a breakthrough on SALT and Berlin, and then our whole post-war relations will be on a new basis. The whole relationship can, indeed, be on a new basis. The press last week spoke of the failure of Berlin. You know better. We are at a point where we should make some agreement. If we culminate one, it will have a massive effect."

Ambassador Dobrynin said, "Are there any other areas of discussion?" Dr. Kissinger said, "Mr. President, he is trying to lead you into the Middle East," and the Ambassador laughed. The President said, "As for the Middle East, there is, of course, a fear of a US/Soviet condominium. Of course, Soviet and U.S. interests are quite different. We both have constituents we may not be able to control, and this makes the situation very explosive. The Middle East is very much on our mind and, at some point, discussions between us will be possible."

The meeting then ended with an exchange of pleasantries.

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STATEMENT OF THE USSR GOVERNMENT

It is already for over a quarter of a century that mankind has been free from a world war. Yet, peace still remains unstable. Military conflicts flare up in different regions of the globe, hotbeds of armed tensions appear in various areas, the danger of global military confrontation still remains.

Armaments drive is one of the factors that makes a particularly negative impact on the entire international life. It breeds an increasing threat to peace, let alone that it consumes tremendous material and intellectual resources that otherwise could be used for an accelerated economic and social progress, to the benefit of peoples. It is clear that nuclear armaments drive is fraught with particular danger. It is the nuclear armaments drive that first of all arouses the concern of peoples, that causes their anxiety for their future.

Addressing this Statement to the Governments of the powers possessing nuclear weapons the USSR Government does not feel it necessary to make a special reference to the exceptional destructive power of such weapons, to the lethal consequences of their use, to the sufferings and hardships that a nuclear war, if it ever occurs, would bring to all the peoples of the world. At the same time, the USSR Government deems it necessary to draw the attention of the Governments of all the nuclear powers to the fact that although the struggle for limiting nuclear arms drive has brought about certain positive results, it has not yet become possible to turn back the process of stockpiling

increasingly destructive means of mass annihilation in the arsenals of nuclear powers. Consequently, ever more persistent efforts towards taking effective measures leading to nuclear disarmament are in order.

The USSR Government believes that to be the duty and responsibility of all the nuclear powers. They, and only they, can and must work out and put into effect a practical program of nuclear disarmament.

This task, of course, cannot be fulfilled if the efforts towards its implementation are made only by one or some of the nuclear powers. Joint actions of all the states possessing nuclear weapons are needed to arrive at their prohibition and destruction.

As is known, the nuclear powers do not yet have a common approach to the solution of the questions of nuclear disarmament and their views on those questions differ in many respects. But this should not be an obstacle to the nuclear powers starting to work jointly to bring their views closer and, by joint effort, to pave the way to nuclear disarmament. That is in the interests of people, the interests of all states, nuclear powers themselves included, since their own safety as well will be much more securely guaranteed by the liquidation of nuclear weapons, than by a further competition in the nuclear arms drive.

With all these considerations in mind the Soviet Government proposes to convene at the earliest time a conference of the five powers possessing nuclear weapons -

the Soviet Union, the United States of America, the People's Republic of China, France and Great Britain. Such a conference should examine the questions of nuclear disarmament as a whole. As regards an agreement that would result from the negotiations, it could encompass both the entire complex of measures in nuclear disarmament and partial measures gradually leading to that goal.

Progress in nuclear disarmament would undoubtedly facilitate the solution of the problem of general and complete disarmament, would make a favorable impact on the entire international situation and would contribute to the strengthening of trust in the relations among states.

The USSR Government proposes to begin through diplomatic channels an exchange of opinion on questions pertaining to the time of convening the conference, the place of holding it, its agenda as well as its procedure.

As to the view of the USSR Government, it believes that the sooner the conference of the five nuclear powers is convened, the better. With regard to the place of holding the conference, its position is open. Any place convenient to other participants is acceptable to us. The Soviet Government would not object to the establishment of a preparatory committee for convening the conference, if such is the common view.

The USSR Government will await with interest the considerations that each of the nuclear powers might have on all these questions. It expresses the hope that this Statement will be given all the attention that the problem of nuclear disarmament deserves, and that through joint efforts of the nuclear powers progress will be ensured in the solution of this problem.